NEW BOOKS.

Lord Robert Wen.

Elinor Glyn's story of "The Vicissitudes of Evangeline" (Harper & Brothers) is very sprightly and amusing. Evangeline was pert, but though a pert demeanor distresses us at times, and though we think that nearly always there is a form of behavior that is better, it must be acknowledged that she was pert in a distinguished manner; and, besides, she was very pretty. We have her own testimony, and the testimony of other characters in the story, that her hair had the color and the sheen of a chestnut newly broken from its burr, that her skin was milk white, that roses abode in her cheeks, that her mouth was scarlet and her teeth adorable—though it has, indeed, been said of teeth that they are only bones and unworthy of the raptures of anybody. We are convinced that her eyes were lovely, though she records that they were green, like a cat's, with longitudinal orifices that opened and shut obviously; they were fringed with long and curving dark lashes very noticeable and captivating in the profilian view.

Evangeline relates her own history in the form of a journal. We dare say that she tells the unflinching and exact truth, as Marie Bashkirtseff and the rest of us do when we are rendering a personal account. We thought she was going to love Mr. Carruthers, whose clothes fitted him, and who was an inch taller than Lord Robert Vavasour. Our crudity in the art of divination is borne in upon us as we find that, in a phrase that we remember, "the reveree is the case." Lord Robert, as we make out, had wide eyes of baby blue. Beware of eyes of the sort in a grown man! He was direct, simple, devoid of cynicism. It rather surprises us to read that he had "a tiny waist" and that he was "just like the Apollo Belvedere." We are not inclined to hold Evangeline to too rude and cold an accuracy. For all of us, she may make the waist of the Apollo tiny if she chooses. Lord Robert was also like Mr. Rochester in the "Jane Eyre" story. He had "nice shoulders," and plainly "could break pokers in half" should there be occasion. We can imagine the power of a man with baby blue eyes, slim waist and powerful shoulders, in certain propitious circumstances.

It is a question whether there would be so much pleasure in the world if handsome young women did not flirt. It is certain that there would not be so much pain. We were sorry for Mr. Carruthers in this story. He was rude to Evangeline at first. He snubbed her. If he had gone to her on his knees it is not certain that the outcome would have been any more felicitous for him. The novelists throw forth all sorts of suggestions, apparently, for our guidance. We should have difficulty, and go deviously enough, in following them all. If Evangeline records in her journal that Lord Robert had "the nicest mouth one ever saw," we should like to know just what any reader would make out at that point from that allegation. What is a nice mouth? Must we consider its shape, its color, or its words?

Oh, friends—hopefully our readers—let us curtail this vain inquiry. In despair of making anything out from the premises, we have often turned incontinently to the end of a story. Here we find that Lord Robert is the man. Evangeline records that he makes her have "the loveliest of thrills." He flashes blue fire out of his baby eyes. We ask ourselves how any female could resist, though another novel might fill us with a wholly different impression.

Poor Caruthers! He sent diamonds and emeralds on the occasion of the wedding. He went through the form, evidently expensive, of being magnanimous. A sprightly story, as we have said. We repeat that we are sorry for Caruthers. Says Evangeline: "To-morrow is my wedding day, and I am going away on a honeymoon with Robert—away into the seventh heaven." We shudder to think how this might have been otherwise if Robert's waist had called for a larger measure.

Back to the Provinces.

Anna McClure Sholl's story of "The Port of Storms" (D. Appleton & Co.) has a good deal that is worthy of notice and commendation. James Erskine's features, "delicately tooled by sharp edges of thought," have not escaped us. It cannot be said that Erskine thought sufficiently well. He was a manufacturer and factor, and he thought in the old fashioned way. He tried to oppose that Western juggernaut, the trust. Of course he had to sell out. We are glad to say that he got $50,000, and sorry to say that he lost this in ill considered speculation.

The story teaches us no lesson founded upon this instance of personal misfortune. We have here chiefly a love story. The fortune of the hero turns upon what seems to us to be the whim of the strongest female personality in the narrative. This strongest female personality has the momentary weakness to be willing to avenge, at the profound cost of her lover, an unimportant social slight put upon her mother. She marries a New Yorker of social importance, in order to see her mother right.

We can imagine no greater injustice to a devoted lover. To be sure, the lover here had need to be punished. He had ceased to love the girl with whom he had grown up as a child. He was kind to her, but he permitted his blood to be stirred by another. We do not hesitate to say that he ought to have had greater control over his blood.

As it turned out, we are sorry for almost everybody in the story. The New Yorker of social and pecuniary eminence, had evidently his moments of humiliation and doubt. So much was good for him, we are bound to say. No matter what the importance, even of a New Yorker of great riches and of "old family," it is plain to us that he needs the occasional correction that life is bound to afford. We see here that he was jealous of somebody from the "provinces." We can conceive of no greater injury to a metropolitan in America. We dare say that this provincial interloper wore ready-made clothes and still had an "air." We forbear from stigmatizing him as he deserves.

Does the reader suppose that a rich young woman of genius, the daughter of a man of genius and head of a trust, needed to pay no penalty? "When she had dismissed her women, and was alone at last in her rooms, she put out the lights that she might not see their accusing beauty. The ceiling painted with the story of Eros and Psyche, the furniture with its suggestions of a dual life, the lovely symbols of the entire setting hurt her, maddened her at times. She had obtained the power which she desired, but she never forgot the price she paid for it. In her hours of triumph this did not seem too dear. Paul was a gentleman, harmless and on the whole tactful. That he had no sense of humor was perhaps his greatest crime. To-night, with the thought of Robert turning in her breast like a sword, the price seemed nothing less than her own soul."

Paul was her husband, the rich New Yorker of ancient family. Robert was the young man from the "provinces," to which he returned after a strenuous season. We need hardly add that "her women" were the lady attendants who consented to wait upon her for a price. The story lacks humor in places, but it is a very capable and readable story notwithstanding.

Pleasant Recollections.

Readers will remember Sara Andrew Shafer's story of a village which time had changed, as time does change villages in America. In "The Day Before Yesterday" she gave a charming account of Rachel and Dick and the others who are the important persons in a village. In "Beyond Chance of Change" (The Macmillan Company) she continued the idea of her earlier book. Here again is the village in the old days. The old women go to market; the feather beds are out, getting the sun and the air; the cats sleep; the dogs stretch out, the hens, the ducks, the geese do according to their wont; the cherries redden, the apples ripen, the piles of wood arise against the necessities of winter; any pessimist who says that there is "nothing doing" has veiled eyes and no capacity to take advantage of his opportunities.

There are Germans in this story. Curiously enough they are not Germans who handle guns and increase the fearful respect that is due to the war lord, the Emperor William. These are Germans who are martial enough. They shoot at targets. They will fight admirably on provocation. But they are no slaughterers and no abject followers. Even as politicians they are independent. They will forsake Carl Schurz and Mr. Ridder on occasion. Principally they raise flowers.

This story tells pleasantly of all the village. It tells of the bluejay and of Nora O'Connor, who was surely not German. It says at the last: "Blessed is the household through which the feet of a little child have danced on their way to Heaven! Blessed are the children who have a little brother among the angels, and oh, blessed above all is the faith that sees Him waiting at the end of the way." This shows the personal note and affords the recommendation that will be strong with many of us.

A Tale of Sicilian Bewilderment.

"Castel Del Monte" is a five act grand opera with an "all star cast" and a continuous performance of some four hundred pages so crowded with splendid pageantry, miraculous incident and tangled plot that it is difficult to determine what it is all about. The scene is laid in Sicily during the reign of Manfred, last of the house of Hohenstaufen, and the stage is filled with Teutons, Saracens, Provençals, Turks and Greeks, with Guelphs and Ghibellines, Cardinals and prelates, nobles and serfs, magicians and monks and astrologers. From the tumultuous beginning, with the splendid procession of the embassies for the coronation of the King, to the tragic conclusion, when the gallant son of Frederick, the poet king of Italy, fell lifeless on the "Field of Roses," there is a busy and bewildering time for everybody—especially the reader. The story, where it can be disentangled at intervals, appears to be concerned with four principal characters—a Lady and a Nun, a bad Duke and a good Knight.

These may be said to form the principal quartet and get all the arias. Occasionally their arduous labors are supplemented by a Monk and a Mad girl. Now, of course, any one who has ever played the game will know the good Knight is madly in love with the Lady and that the bad Duke has persuaded the Nun to break her vows and to become his accomplice. It goes without denial, too, that in the midst of carnivals and masques and battles the bad Duke is always occupied with laying plots for the ruin of the Knight, and that the Knight falls into the snares jauntily, however sinister their purpose, knowing full well that he will be rescued through the intervention of the Lady. There are rivers of gore, whirlwinds of adjectives, deliriums of passion ardent and fiery, gallant deeds, magic potions, secret caverns, spiritual visitants, the thunder of excommunication from the Pope, curses, spells and all sorts of things packed into the story.

But when the bad Duke has killed the Nun, mistaking her for an enemy, the Monk has treated the Duke to some of his own poisoned wine, the Knight has been slain on the field of battle, and the Lady, holding his gory head in her lap, drinks a deadly potion—there is nothing to do but to ring down the curtain and put out the lights, and no one is sorry. The book is written by Nathan Gallizier and published by L. L. Page & Co.

A Romance of the Fighting Days of France.

"The Winged Helmet," by Harold Steele Mackaye (L. C. Page & Co.), is a tale of intrigue and adventure in the days when Francis I. encamped at Lyons with the splendid army he had gathered for the conquest of Milan and Charles of Bourbon waited in one of his many castles gathering his vassals to his standard and pleading illness as an excuse for his failure to join his sovereign. The author claims to have based the story upon old manuscripts and oral traditions relating to the affairs of the families with which it is engaged—one serving in the King's ranks and the other supporting the cause of the Bourbon. The plot is slight, the narration simple and direct, and the story is differentiated from the ordinary romance founded upon history in that the plot turns upon a wife's honor rather than the winning of a fair lady's favor. Indeed, it is a romance with little love or passion, a tale of warfare with none of the pageantry and turmoil of battle.

The Winged Helmet, which gives the title to the book, is the device used by two lovers as a symbol of their devotion. The losing of a handkerchief bearing this device causes a loyal wife a vast deal of sorrow from the unjust jealousy of her consort and involves several people in a series of adventures which have in the end a very satisfactory conclusion.

Mr. Henry's Unwritten Law.

Arthur Henry, following the modern fashion of employing the novel to exploit theories and to convey moral lessons, has presented certain sociological problems peculiar to the present phase of civilization in the form of a story called "The Unwritten Law." It is a crude, raw fragment of human life torn off, bleeding and repulsive, and thrown down for the examination of the careless and the curious—a life study of untamed human passion repellant in its unnecessary frankness and misplaced in a book of fiction. True scientific investigation impels reverent attention and clothes any subject with dignity. But there are treatises essential to the physician's library not to be considered for the family bookshelves, there are subjects discussed in the dissecting room and lecture hall not adapted to general conversation; so there are phases of life that should be confined to sociological investigation and not presented to indiscriminate readers in the form of a story.

It would seem, moreover, that Mr. Henry's book is well calculated to precipitate the evil it deplores. To attest that an offence is common and universal is to suggest it to the innocent and to condone it in the guilty. Moreover, the author has taken as much pains to circumvent Providence for the sake of rewarding the unworthy and bringing disaster upon those who do not deserve it as the old moralists were to reverse the order.

The book starts off pleasantly with the simple minded old German engraver loving his faithful wife, his little daughters and his bit of garden. But owing to the failure of the bank in which his savings are deposited, his inability to procure work and the bad advice of a friend, the troubled old man makes counterfeit bills, is arrested and condemned to a convict's cell. The faithful old mother dies by the roadside on her way to visit him. Of the two children, the loving, devoted sweet hearted daughter falls into evil habits, and the selfish, calculating heartless sister weds the wealthy magnate's son and is apparently happy, forever after leaving her cards at teas and functions. Evidently all this misfortune is brought upon a poor but deserving family to bring out into prominence a young lawyer of high moral principle and the girl he persuades into wedding him by methods that would be most unpleasant to any girl of spirit and modesty.

"The Unwritten Law" is the diagnosis of a very sick world, but no remedy is suggested for its betterment. The book is published by A. S. Barnes & Co.

Mr. Quiller-Couch's Cornish Tale.

In "Shining Ferry" (Charles Scribner's Sons) Mr. A. T. Quiller-Couch supplies all the material of a fine story, charming, living people and pleasant descriptions of scenery, offset by a weak rambling plot that is meaningless, unless he intends to show that a slimy, self-righteous creature may be sincere after all.

He starts with a genealogy which turns out to be immaterial to the tale. He presents us with a fine specimen of a self-made man, with two wholly delightful girls, with a fine old nautical lady, with a hearty young sailor, with three interesting children and with a lot of curious, vivid eccentrics who are often lovable, so that his book is well worth reading, but the motives that make the people act seem strangely inadequate.

The bits of human nature, the pictures of English life and the excellent English, however, are worth the reader's while and make the book more enjoyable than many better constructed tales.

Tall Tales of the Sea.

Sea yarns must be swallowed without salt, and those that Mr. Arthur Colton tells in "The Belted Seas" (Henry Holt & Co.) will perhaps stand salt less than most. He has devised an amusing lot of sea folk, and the marvellous adventures through which they pass have for the moment at least the touch of verisimilitude. The conversion of the good ship Helen Mar, for instance, into a wayside inn is picturesque at least. The last stories are perhaps the least satisfactory, but all are breezy and amusing and all are readable.

Bryan's Dictionary of Painters.

With the fifth volume, the new and practically rewritten edition of Bryan's "Dictionary of Painters and Engravers," edited by Dr. George C. Williamson (Macmillans), is completed. In its present form it utters the last word, so far as an encyclopædia can, on the whole range of artistic knowledge covered by the title. The revolutionary overhauling of the old Italian, Dutch and Flemish masters by modern criticism has made revision necessary at almost every point, and death has brought in a great number of new names, for in the dictionary the living are excluded.

How thoroughly up to date the work is may be judged by the inclusion in this volume in proper alphabetical place, of George Frederick Watts, Whistler, Verestchagin, Edwin L. Weeks and James Tissot. The editor was unable for lack of room to include artists earlier in the alphabet who have died since the first volumes appeared, but hopes to issue a supplementary volume. It is a mighty series of names that runs from S to Z. Titian, Velasquez, Leonardo da Vinci, Perugino, Luca Signorelli, Teniers, Watteau, Turner and the countless Vans. Modern painters, perhaps, are allowed more space than is their due, as the editor admits, Whistler, for instance, getting over six pages to a scant four each for Titian and Leonardo and Velasquez. The list of Whistler etchings is very complete.

The lists of works and bibliographies attached to each article are admirable. The photogravures are generally good, and other full page illustrations are numerous. The dictionary has been made indispensable to collectors and students of art by Dr. Williamson's admirable editing.

Italian Society.

The very pleasant reminiscences which Mme. Waddington has been publishing in *Scribner's Magazine*, come now in book form in "Italian Letters of a Diplomat's Wife," by Mary King Waddington (Charles Scribner's Sons). The author had every opportunity of seeing and hearing the very best that was going on in Italian society. Her visit in the '80s, when her husband was out of office, left her free to see every one and everything. The later letters, only a year old, show us the Rome of to-day, both the Quirinal and the Vatican side. She gives us very entertaining pictures of famous people and of notorieties, and perhaps a closer view than she suspects of her esteemed husband, "W.," as she calls him.

American Trees.

An admirable book in every way by a past master in his subject, a book that goes straight to the foundations and that every one that loves trees must have, is Prof. Charles Sprague Sargent's "Manual of the Trees of North America, Exclusive of Mexico" (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.). The veteran director of the Arnold Arboretum has condensed in these 800 pages the mass of information contained in his monumental "The Silva of North America," putting it in clear language that all can understand. This is one of the fundamental books. The wonderfully clear descriptions are helped out by Dr. Charles Edward Faxon's excellent drawings. These are real illustrations that show every essential feature and leave no room for doubt. Though a purely scientific, descriptive manual of trees, Prof. Sargent's book cannot fail to give a strong impulse to the practical side of forestry, which has only recently been taken up in earnest.

In the multitude of books that overwhelm the public this one stands out by itself. It is the book that every tree lover must have. It tells him all he wants to know and nothing that he must unlearn.

Mr. Seaman's Parodies.

It sometimes seems a pity that the command of rhythmical form and the sense of humor that some young Englishmen develop should turn to parody and to contributions to *Punch* instead of individual effort. We regret it particularly in the case of Mr. Owen Seaman, whose latest volume, "A Harvest of Chaff" (Henry Holt & Co.), is extremely clever and often amusing in spite of the use of themes of very ephemeral interest.

If Mr. Kipling lasts and if anybody remembers who Alfred Austin was twenty years from now, the Austinian paraphrase of "The Absent Minded Beggar" should become a classic of British parody, but we fear that one contingency at least will fail and that by that time nobody will understand Mr. Seaman's skit. The amusing "Wagner Dialogue," which is by no means so good, is more likely to survive.

At the end we find a set of obituary poems which *Punch* was called upon to publish from time to time. They show the author's command of verse form and make us regret the more that he will not write for himself.

Mr. Huneker and Some Dramatists.

In "Iconoclasts, a Book of Dramatists" (Charles Scribner's Sons) Mr. James Huneker has collected a number of essays originally printed in THE SUN. They are mainly didactic, that is to say, so much as anything that Mr. Huneker writes can be didactic, and will give the uninformed reader a clear and intelligible view of various persons who are much talked about, Ibsen, Strindberg, Hauptmann, Sudermann, and even Maeterlinck and G. Bernard Shaw, enlivened by the author's picturesque digressions and epigrams. Here, however, Mr. Huneker knows what he is talking about as few others do and expresses his own views.

With regard to the French dramatists he seems more ready to accept conventional opinions. He holds up to admiration, as so many others do, those intolerable literary humbugs, the De Goncourts, the platitudes of Henri Becque, and the commonplaces of Paul Hervieu. Some day, perhaps, we may get some plain facts about the production of "Henriette Maréchal" and how little it amounted to in literature. Mr. Huneker, however, is always entertaining, and when he goes wrong it is never for lack of information.

Fiction.

Judging merely from "The Celibates' Club" (Macmillans), it is not in humor that Mr. I. Zangwill shines. The book is an

Continued on Eighth Page.

PUBLICATIONS.

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